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March 24, 2020

Chairman DeAnn T. Walker
Commissioner Arthur C. D'Andrea
Commissioner Shelly Botkin
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Project 50664—Issues Related to the State of Disaster for Coronavirus Disease 2019

Dear Commissioners:

The Texas Cable Association (TCA) is working with its company members who provide high-speed broadband to ensure that all Texans can stay connected at this critical time when being connected is more important than ever.

TCA has issued the attached statement, and a detailed roundup of steps each of our member companies – Altice USA (Suddenlink services), Charter Communications (Spectrum Services), Comcast and Sparklight (formerly Cable One) – are proactively taking.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 512 633-2141.

Sincerely,

Walt Baum
President
Texas Cable Association

Enclosure

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 24, 2020**

Contact: Kirsten Voinis
(512) 922-7141 or
kvoinis@txcable.com

CABLE LAUNCHING NEW STEPS TO KEEP TEXANS AND U.S. CONNECTED

Broadband providers expanding access to aid education, keep networks strong during COVID-19 crisis

The Texas Cable Association (TCA) is working with its company members that provide high-speed broadband to ensure that all Texans can stay connected at a time when being connected is more important and necessary than ever. TCA has issued the following statement, followed by a roundup of steps our member companies – Altice USA (Suddenlink services), Charter Communications (Spectrum Services), Comcast and Sparklight (formerly Cable One) – are taking.

The following statement can be attributed to TCA President Walt Baum:

“Reliance on broadband networks has become critical as Americans spend more time in isolation while trying to continue to attend school, work, stay informed and entertained, and connect with friends and family. In Texas and across the nation, cable companies are answering the call for reliable and expanded access to high-speed internet during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Texas Cable Association is working closely with state leadership to make sure Texas has the tools it needs to help our state during this time, including using our capabilities to get credible, accurate information out to Texans. As part of this commitment, our four cable company members are donating air time to run a [Public Service Announcement by Gov. Greg Abbott](#) which promotes simple and effective ways for Texans to respond to the coronavirus.

“Network demand recently has grown due to increased work-from-home and school-from-home. Cable networks are already engineered to handle spikes and shift in usage patterns, such as large traffic increases around events such as the Superbowl or the Olympics.

“In addition, cable’s regional and national centers are carefully monitoring network performance around the clock. Cable companies have national, interconnected networks; if needed, traffic can be shifted to redundant systems. We are confident that internet capacity will continue to perform, even under increased demand.

“Cable broadband providers also have expanded existing initiatives that provide internet services for low income families; with schools in Texas now closed, we want all students to be able to continue their education without interruption.”

All four Texas Cable Association members are among the first U.S. cable and telecommunications companies to sign the [FCC’s “Keep Americans Connected Pledge.”](#) Companies that sign the pledge promise that, for the next 60 days, they will not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their Wi-Fi hotspots to all.

TCA members also are taking the following specific steps:



Altice USA, which provides Suddenlink services

- For households with K-12 and/or college students who may be displaced due to school closures and who do not currently have home internet access, Altice USA is offering its Altice Advantage 30 Mbps broadband solution for free for 60 days to new customer households within our footprint. Eligible households interested in this solution can call 888-633-0030 to enroll in the Suddenlink region, which includes Texas.
- Altice USA has signed the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," promising that, for the next 60 days, it will not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their Wi-Fi hotspots to all.
- Altice USA has aligned with public health authorities and has a team dedicated to its response to the pandemic and business continuity plans to ensure the continuation of services.
- As employees interact with customers and the general public, Altice USA has taken steps to limit exposure to and spread of the virus. Altice USA has put restrictions on travel, is postponing large-scale events, encouraging virtual meetings, and providing remote work solutions.
- Deep cleaning practices and more frequent cleaning have been implemented in Altice USA stores and offices.
- Altice USA is in contact with large hospital systems, schools and government agencies to ensure they have the connectivity services they need to assist the public during this time.

Altice USA media-only contact: Janet Meahan, 516-519-2353,
Janet.meahan@alticeusa.com

Charter Communications, which provides Spectrum services

- Charter will significantly expand access to high speed broadband for households that include K-12 and college students, and it is working with school districts and public libraries on remote learning opportunities.
 - Free Spectrum Internet Assist service, with speeds of 30 Mbps, is available for low income families who are not already enrolled in the program.
 - Charter will offer free Spectrum broadband at any service level up to 100 Mbps (or 200 Mbps in certain markets) and Wi-Fi access to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription. A free self-installation kit will be provided to new subscriber households. To enroll, call 1-844-488-8395.
 - Charter will partner with school districts to ensure local communities are aware of these tools to help students learn remotely.
 - Spectrum Internet does not ever impose data caps or hidden fees.
- Charter has signed the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," promising that, for the next 60 days, it will not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their



Wi-Fi hotspots to all. A map of all Spectrum Wi-Fi hot spots is available here: www.Spectrum.com/WiFi-Hotspots

- Spectrum News has opened its websites to ensure people have access to news and information.
- Charter has also donated airtime to run 1,000 COVID-19 public service announcement (PSA) spots per week, including on all Spectrum News Networks, for four weeks to our full footprint of 16,000,000 video subscribers at an approximate value of \$3,000,000 each week. Additionally, Charter will run the PSAs on our digital video and streaming apps.

Charter media-only contact: Brian Anderson, 972-630-5043, Brian.Anderson@charter.com

Comcast, which provides Xfinity services

- Comcast has made it even easier for low-income families who live in a Comcast service area to sign-up for Internet Essentials, the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Additionally, for all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program's Internet service was increased to 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. That increase will go into effect for no additional fee and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.
- Comcast has signed the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," promising that, for the next 60 days, it will not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their Wi-Fi hotspots to all. For a map of Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots, and then launch a browser.
- Comcast has created new educational collections for all grade levels in partnership with Common Sense Media. Just say "education" into the X1 or Flex voice remote. To help keep customers informed, Comcast also has created a collection of the most current news and information on coronavirus. Just say "coronavirus" into the X1 or Flex voice remote.
- Comcast is pausing its data plans for 60 days, giving all customers unlimited data for no additional charge.
- Comcast's technology and engineering teams will continue to work tirelessly to support network operations. Engineers and technicians staff network operations centers 24/7 to ensure network performance and reliability. Comcast is monitoring network usage and watching the load on the network both nationally and locally, and to date it is performing well.

Comcast media-only contact: Michael Bybee, 713- 637-5121, Michael_Bybee@comcast.com

Sparklight, formerly Cable One

- A 15 Mbps internet plan for \$10 per month is available for the next 60 days to help low income families and those most impacted from coronavirus challenges, such as



seniors and college students. No documentation will be required to sign up for this plan.

Sparklight has signed the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," promising that, for the next 60 days, it will not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their Wi-Fi hotspots to all.

- Sparklight has made unlimited data available on all internet services for the next 30 days.
- Sparklight stands ready to support critical infrastructure with speed upgrades and other requests to ensure ongoing and reliable service for local educators and health care professionals, including customers under federal rural healthcare and E-rate programs.

Sparklight media-only contact: Patricia Niemann, 602-364-6372,
patricia.niemann@sparklight.biz

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TCA (www.txcable.com) has been the primary trade organization for cable operators in Texas since 1960. Members include Altice USA, Charter Communications, Comcast and Sparklight. Follow TCA's activities on Facebook (www.facebook.com/texascable) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/texascable).